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INFORMATION ON RAILROAD SYSTEM AND HIGHWAY BRIDGES IN ALBANIA

[Comment and Summary: The following report describes the Albanian railroad system, its rolling stock, lines, stations, tunnels, and bridges; and highway bridges, their size and construction. Four sketches are appended.

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I. ALBANIAN RAILROAD SYSTEM

Albania has two main lines. The Durres-Elbasan trunk line was begun by the Italians before World War II and completed after the war. The Durres-Tirana line was built after the war. In 1952, two new locomotives were obtained from Czechoslovakia. The lines had no efficient locomotives before that date. The Tirana station has only one shunting locomotive. There are 15 old locomotives at the roundhouse in Durres, and three or four in Elbasan. A roundhouse, railroad repair shop, and coal depot are located at Durres at the junction of the two trunk lines. The repair shop is poorly equipped, and repairs are limited to ordinary services, such as repairing the tubes of locomotives and oiling. The number of passenger cars is unknown. In 1952, 30 new flatcars, each mounted on two double bogies, were received from Poland.

Third-class passenger fare is about one lek per kilometer. Third-class tickets from Tirana to Durres (37 kilometers) are 40 leks.

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A. Durres-Elbasan Line

The Durres-Elbasan line is 96 kilometers long, and has a single track. It is of standard international gauge, 143.5 centimeters. It goes along the north side of the Elbasan-Durres highway, but at a higher elevation. The steepest grade is at Peqin, the mid point. Here the grade is 6 per 1,000 [0.6 percent]. The line has the following points of interest (See Sketch 1):

1. Main Station in Elbasan

The main station in Elbasan is located opposite the Mako Spiru Lumber Combine. The source has no information on its equipment.

2. Railroad Bridge Over the Zaranika River

The railroad bridge over the Zaranika River is 160 meters long, is of concrete, has 10 spans, each 16 meters wide, and has two abutment piers. It is wide enough for a single track and has raised reinforced concrete footways on both sides, for servicing. The average height of the bridge from the bed of the stream is 9 meters. Fields bordering the stream are from 5 to 6 meters above it. The current under the bridge is very strong. The bridge was built in 1947 and 1948.

3. Railroad Overpass

A railroad overpass goes over the Elbasan-Tirana highway. The overpass is 87 meters long, with three 9-meter spans and two abutment piers. It is of concrete, is 6 meters high, and wide enough for a single track plus reinforced footways on each side. An embankment, 2 kilometers long and rising to a height of 6 meters, leads to the overpass from the east. To the west the embankment is only 200 meters long, and since the railroad runs halfway up along adjacent hills, is about 2.5 meters above the level of the Elbasan-Durres highway.

4. Papër Railroad Station

The Papër station has one through track and five switch tracks, each about 300 meters long. There is a small two-story building for servicing the station. There are no indoor facilities for freight. This station is the terminus of the branch line to the Cerrik Oil Refinery. Metal "Erbert" [H?] girders received from UNRRA and reserved for the nearby highway bridge over the Shkumbi River are stored near the station.

5. Bridge Over the Papër River

The railroad bridge over the Papër River is 210 meters long, with 20 [sic] spans and two abutment piers. It is of concrete, is wide enough for a single track, and has reinforced concrete footways on either side. Average height from the stream bed is 8 meters. The banks of the stream are high and precipitous, and the current is very strong.

6. Mount Shtylle Railroad Tunnels

The Mount Shtylle railroad tunnels (see Sketch 2) and bridges were built by the Italian Cidonio Company. This section of road has the following sections:

a. The first part is a railroad tunnel through rock. The tunnel is 70 meters long and 4.5 meters wide at the base. It is semivaulted, has platforms for inspection, and drainage canals.

b. The railroad bridge over the Ranze Stream is 35 meters long with six spans and two abutment piers. It is of concrete, is wide enough for a single track, and has raised reinforced concrete footways on either side. Height above the stream bed is 15 meters.

c. A second tunnel, 750 meters long and 4.5 meters wide at the base, runs through rock. The tunnel is slightly curved and semivaulted. It has platforms for inspection, gutters, and drainage canals.

d. This tunnel opens onto a concrete bridge 120 meters long, with nine 13-meter spans and two abutment piers. The bridge holds a single track and has raised reinforced concrete footways on either side.

7. Babelac Railroad Tunnels

The Babelac railroad tunnels and bridges (see Sketch 3) were built by the Italian Cidonio Company. This stretch of road has the following sections:

a. The first section is a semivaulted tunnel, 75 meters long and 4.5 meters wide at the base. It has a single track, platforms for inspections, and drainage canals.

b. The second section is a bridge, 24 meters long, with three 8-meter long spans and two abutment piers. It is of concrete and has an average height of 6-7 meters. It is wide enough for a single track and has raised reinforced concrete footways on either side.

c. Next is a railroad tunnel cut through rock. It is semivaulted, 224 meters long and 4.5 meters wide at the base. It has platforms, canals, and ditches for drainage. This tunnel is 160 meters distant from the first.

d. The Babelac railroad bridge is about 5 meters from the tunnel. It is 135 meters long, and has nine 15-meter spans and two abutment piers. It is of concrete and is 15 meters above the water. It is wide enough for a single track and has raised reinforced concrete footways on either side.

8. Babelac Railroad Station

The so-called Babelac railroad station is located at Kasheku. It is a junction station with one through track and two 800-meter switch tracks. It has no equipment.

9. Railroad Bridge Over the Listic Stream (commonly called the Bones)

The Italians had built bases for 14 piers which were to hold 15 spans, however, the Albanians used only eight piers to put up nine spans. The length is 140 meters, with nine 15-meter span and two abutment piers. The bridge is concrete and has an average height of 15 meters. It is wide enough for a single track and has a raised reinforced footway on either side.

10. Peqin Station

The Peqin station has one through track and four 250-300 meter switch tracks. It consists of a two-story station and a freight shed.

11. Rrogozhine Station

The Rrogozhine station has one through track and six or seven 500-meter switch tracks. The station has a two-story 50 by 15 meter building and three freight sheds with tile roofs, each shed about 40 meters long. It is equipped with two 5-ton VINC [winch?] cranes mounted on Zis chassis.

12. Rrogozhine Railroad Tunnel

The Rrogozhine railroad tunnel was built by the Italian Cidonio Company. It is about 300 meters west of the station and is 430 meters long and 4.5 meters wide at the base. It has platforms for inspection, drainage canals, and ditches.

13. Darc Railroad Bridge

The Darc railroad bridge is 24 meters long, has three 8-meter spans and two abutment piers. It is of concrete, is wide enough for a single track, and has raised reinforced concrete footways on either side. The bridge is from 8 to 9 meters above the water. Banks are steep at this point.

14. Kavaje Station

The Kavaje station was built under the supervision of Yugoslav engineers, and is as well-built as the Rrogozhine station. It has one through track and six or seven 500-meter switch tracks. The station is a two-story building about 50 by 15 meters. In addition, there are three freight sheds with tile roofs, each shed about 40 meters long. Two of these sheds are equipped with loading platforms.

15. Bajn'e Durresit Station

This is only a servicing station with a single track.

16. Servicing Yard

A servicing yard with a roundhouse, repair shop, coal depot, and freight scales service the entire Albanian rail network. This yard is located about 500 meters east of the intersection of the Durres-Tirana and Durres-Shkamb i Kavajes highways. The yard has one through track and nine 400-meter switch tracks. The repair shop is not equipped for heavy repairs.

17. Durres Station

The Durres railroad station is located near the port. It occupies the building of the former SITA Steam Electric Power Company. The station yards have six or seven 600-700 meter switch tracks. A spur line runs to the docks.

B. Durres-Tirana Line

The Durres-Tirana line is 37 kilometers long. It is single-track and standard international gauge, 143.5 centimeters. The route is shown on Sketch 1. An old route planned by the Germans in 1920 is indicated by No 24 on the sketch. The line has the following points of interest (See Sketch 1):

18. Rashbull Tunnel

The Rashbull tunnel is 180 meters long, 4.5 meters wide at the base, and has a single track. It has inspection platforms, drainage canals, and ditches. The tunnel was built by the Albanians. Thirteen workers were killed by cave-ins during construction because of the lack of modern equipment. The tunnel was built under the supervision of construction engineer Giabri, now at the Planning Directorate in Tirana.

19. Railroad Bridge Over the Erzen River

A railroad bridge was built over the Erzen River in 1952. It is about 50 meters long, with four spans, and two abutment piers. It is wide enough for a single track and has raised reinforced concrete footways on either side. It is 15 meters above the water.

20. Sukth Station

The Sukth station has a small wooden shed, a through track, and a 500-meter switch track.

21. Vorre Station

The Vorre station has a wooden station building, a wooden warehouse, one through track and two 300-meter switch tracks.

22. Kamze Servicing Station

The servicing station in Kamze has a small shed and a through track but no switch tracks.

23. Tirana Station

The Tirana station (see Sketch 4) includes the following:

a. Main building of wood, about 40 by 10 meters

b. Wooden shed for cement storage

c. Water tank

d. Entrance gate

e. Passenger platform

f. Five or six 800-meter switch tracks

[24 Old Route]

25. Side Track

A side track runs from the Durres-Tirana main line to the Stalin Combine in Tirana.

C. Miscellaneous

The Tirana station is the only one with passenger platforms. There are no turntables on the Durres-Tirana line and locomotives must return from Tirana to Durres in reverse.

D. New Railroad Lines

In 1950, a plan was drawn up for building a single-track standard gauge line along the following route: Krogozhine-Lushnje-Fier-Vlore. A 900-millimeter gauge line along an unknown route will be built between the Memaliaj coal mine and Vlore in 1955.

II. HIGHWAY BRIDGES

The Albanian road network has changed little since the departure of Italian military forces. In 1950 and 1951 the Krogozhine-Vlore highway was the only road to be resurfaced with asphalt. Other asphalt roads built at that time are in poor repair and roadbeds are not level.

The following are the principal highway bridges:

The Ura e Zogut (Zog's bridge) crosses the Mat River at Milot. Two spans of the bridge were destroyed during World War II, but have been rebuilt with metal "Erbert" [H?] beams supplied by UNRRA. The roadway is 2.9 meters wide.

The Durres-Tirana highway crosses the Erzen River via a bridge built by the Italians. The bridge was not damaged during World War II. It is from 50 to 60 meters long with three spans. Its height above the water is unknown. The bridge is of metal girders on a concrete base.

The road from Fier through Krogozhine crosses the Shkumb River via a bridge 250 meters long and 2.9 meters wide. The bridge was destroyed during World War II, but rebuilt in 1946. The bridge is supported by pillars 8 meters apart. The pillars consist of 100 millimeter pipe from the oil field in Stalin Town. Piledrivers were used to sink them into the riverbed. The roadbed is of metal frame covered with planking.

The Cerrik-Gramsh highway crosses the Shkumb River at Hajdaran, a suburb of Elbasan. The bridge at this point was destroyed during the war, but rebuilt in 1945 and 1946. It is 90 meters long, has two spans, and is 2.9 meters wide. It is 12 meters above the water. It is a girder bridge on reinforced concrete piers.

A road from Paper to the Cerrik Oil Refinery crosses the Shkumb River. The bridge at this point was of wood and was built by the Cidonio Company, but was destroyed during the war. A new bridge of metal girders supplied by UNRRA was set up in its place in 1946 and 1947. The bridge is about 60 meters long and 2.9 meters wide, and has two spans. It is 10 meters above the water. Girders for repair of the bridge in case of damage or destruction are stored near the Paper railroad station.

The Elbasan-Korce highway crossed the Shkumb River at Librazhd. The bridge at this point was destroyed during the war, but rebuilt in 1945. It is 120 meters long and 2.9 meters wide and has four spans and two abutment piers. Height above the water is 3 to 4 meters. It was rebuilt with girders supplied by UNRRA.

The Elbasan-Durres highway crosses the Babelac River via a bridge 40 meters long, including two spans and two abutment piers and about 3.5 meters wide. It is made of girders on concrete piers.

The Fier-Lushnje road crosses the Semen River via a bridge 120-130 meters long and 2.9 meters wide. The bridge has four spans and two abutment piers, and is 5 meters above the water. It is made of girders supplied by UNRRA.

The Fier-Roskovec road crosses the Gjanice River, within the city of Fier by means of an 18-meter long bridge which has two spans and two abutment piers and is 5.5 meters wide. The bridge is 8 meters above the water. It is of girders on concrete piers.

UNRRA girders are kept in the open near all main Albanian bridges for use in emergency. The girders are not painted periodically to prevent rusting. Important highway and railroad bridges are guarded by the police.

[Appended sketches follow:]

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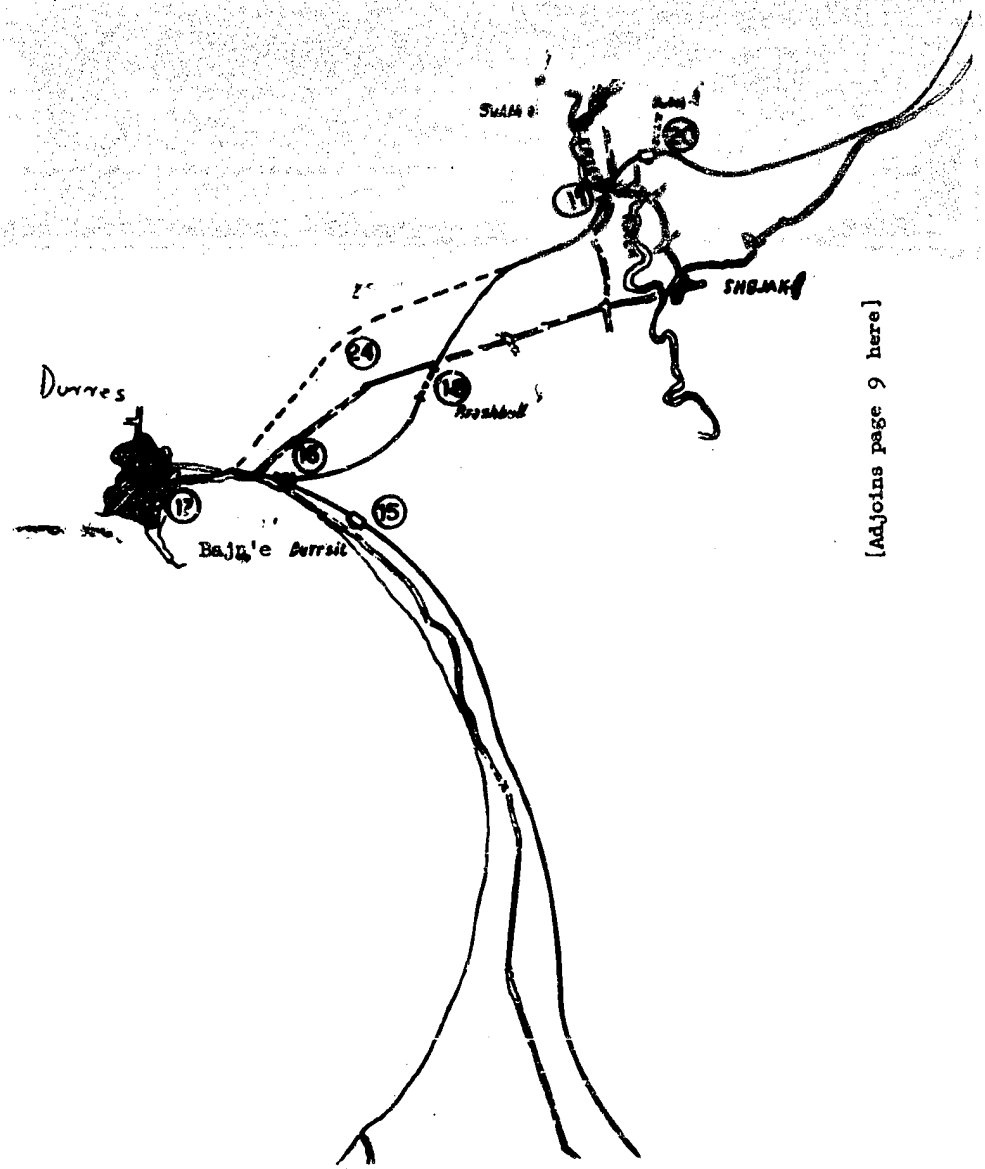
Sketch 1. Durres-Tirana and Durres-Elbasan Railroads



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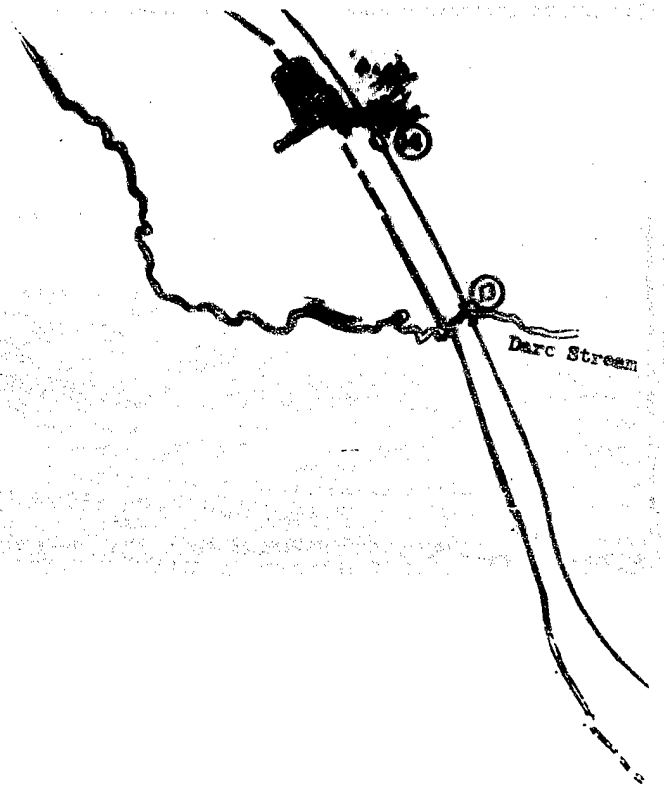
[Sketch 1. Continued]



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[Sketch 1. Continued]

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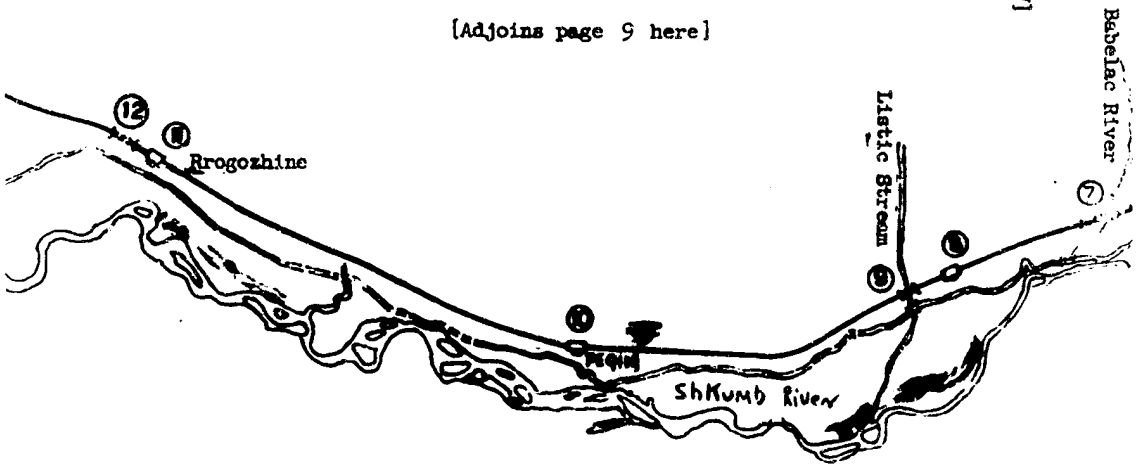

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Sketch 1. Durres-Tirana and Durres-Elbasan Railroads

Key to Sketch 1.

1. Main station at Elbasan
2. Railroad Bridge Over the Zaranika River
3. Railroad Overpass
4. Papër Railroad Station
5. Bridge Over the Papër River
6. Mount Shtylle Railroad Tunnels
7. Babelac Railroad Tunnels
8. Babelac Railroad Station
9. Railroad Bridge Over the Listic Stream
10. Peqin Station
11. Rrogozhine Station
12. Rrogozhine Railroad Tunnel
13. Darc Railroad Bridge
14. Kavaje Station
15. Bajn'e Durresit Station
16. Servicing Yard
17. Durres Station
18. Rashbull Tunnel
19. Railroad Bridge Over the Erzen River
20. Sukth Station
21. Vorre Station
22. Kamze Servicing Station
23. Tirana Station
24. Old Route
25. Side Track

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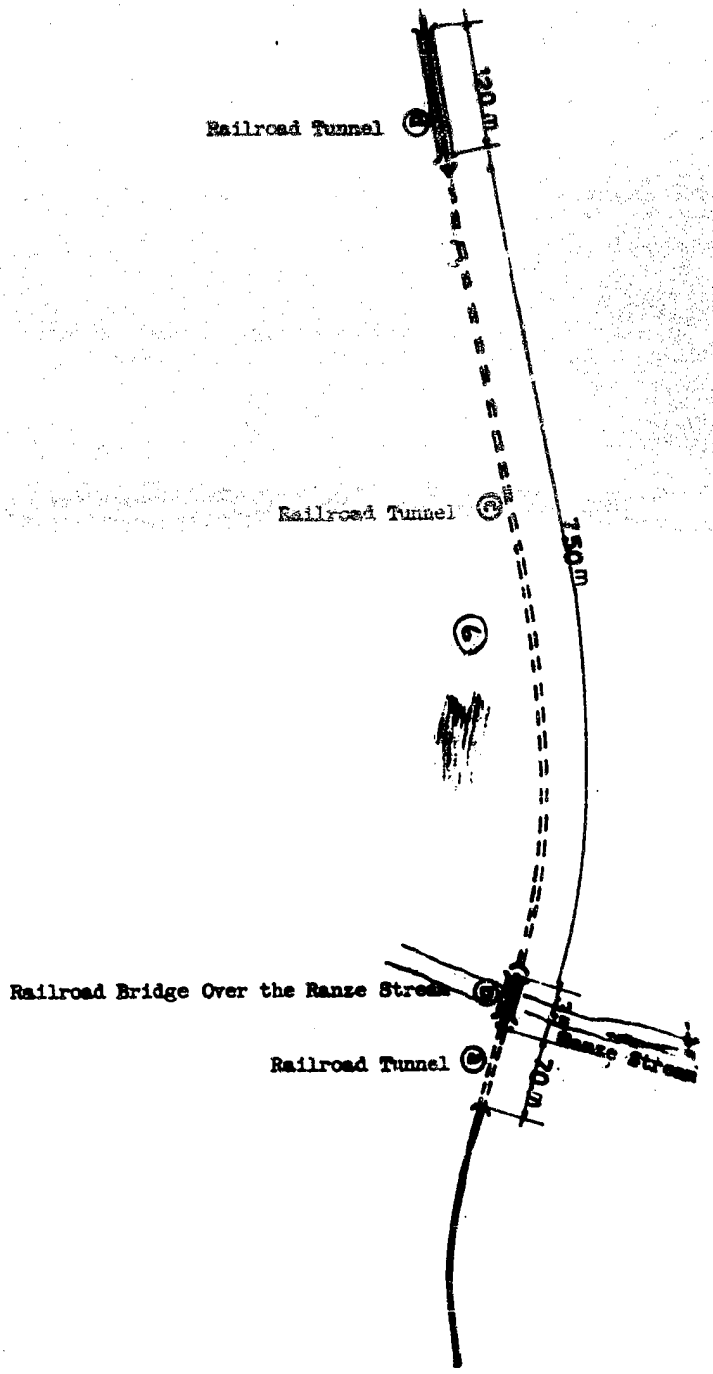

Sketch 2. Mount Shtylla Tunnels and Bridges

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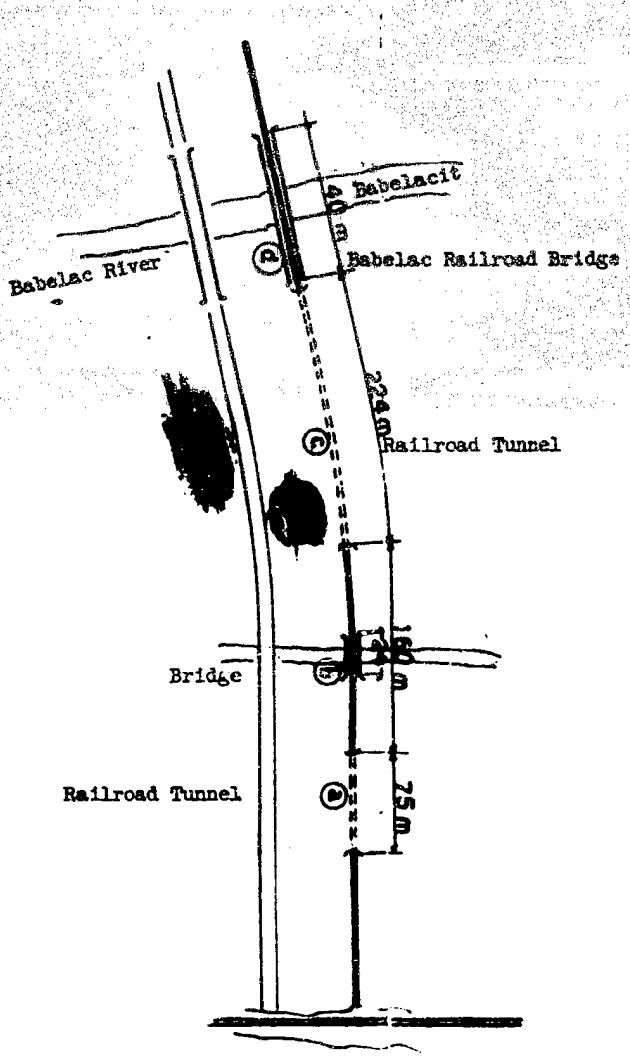

Sketch 3. Babelac Tunnels and Bridges

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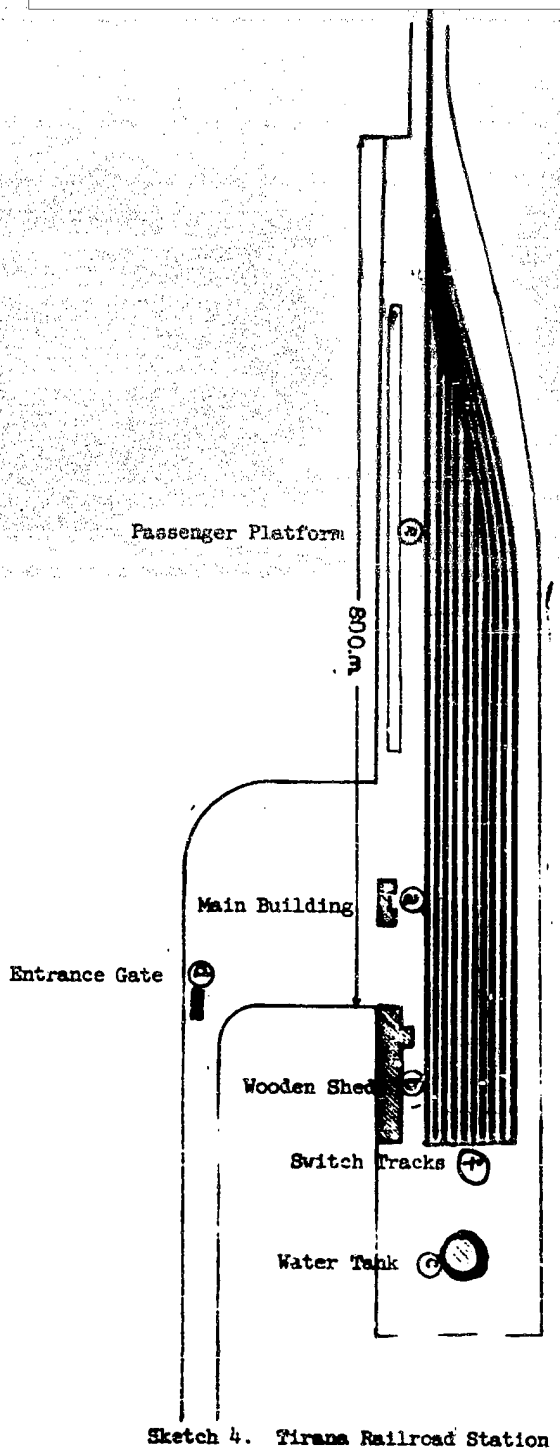

Sketch 4. Tirana Railroad Station

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